



Charles Dickens **Literary Lives**

Comprehension Questions

1. What is Charles Dickens famous for?

2. What happened to Dickens when he was 12?

3. What was Dickens' first job after leaving school?

4. How many instalments were there of 'The Pickwick Papers'?

5. What was Dickens' 'comeback' novella, published in 1843? What is it about?

6. How did Dickens meet Ellen Ternan?

7. Name two organisations Dickens help to raise money for.

8. What is Mesmerism?



9. What happened to Dickens in 1865?

10. What is unusual about 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood'?





Charles Dickens Literary Lives - Answers

1. What is Charles Dickens famous for?

He wrote over a dozen novels as well as many short stories, essays and sketches. He also toured extensively and was considered an international celebrity.

2. What happened to Dickens when he was 12?

He was sent to work at a boot blacking factory as his family were going through a financial crisis.

3. What was Dickens' first job after leaving school?

He was the junior clerk for a firm of lawyers.

4. How many instalments were there of 'The Pickwick Papers'?

Nineteen.

5. What was Dickens' 'comeback' novella, published in 1843? What is it about?

'A Christmas Carol'. The novella is about a miserly old man who encounters four ghosts on Christmas Eve.

6. How did Dickens meet Ellen Ternan?

She was an actress in a play he was producing with Wilkie Collins.

7. Name two organisations Dickens help to raise money for.

Great Ormond Street Hospital and Urania Cottage, a home for fallen women.

8. What is Mesmerism?

A technique, invented by Franz Mesmer, where a patient is put into a trance and then 'healed' by a Mesmerist who passes them invisible waves of their own energy or 'animal magnetism'.

9. What happened to Dickens in 1865?

He was travelling in a train with Ellen Ternan and her mother. They were going through Staplehurst in Kent when the train derailed. Dickens tried to help the wounded until rescuers came. Ten people were killed and forty were wounded.

10. What is unusual about 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood'?

It is unfinished – Dickens died before he could complete it.